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Title: Need to protect life and properties from elephant menace in Berhampur, Odisha.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Mr. Chairman, thank you. Elephants are creating havoc in Odisha. Large tracts of the border districts are being trampled by marauding pachyderms. Hoards of elephants are migrating from Saranda jungle of Jharkhand which stretches from Chhattisgarh to West Bengal. During this *kharif* cutting season, when the paddy crop is ripe, large number of elephants are coming from Chhattisgarh and also from Jharkhand and are destroying the houses of people of Odisha in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Keonjhar. They are destroying the paddy fields immensely. The farmers are unable to get any type of compensation or support for their crop loss or for their houses getting destroyed.

Similarly, the elephants from Andhra Pradesh are entering into Odisha and are creating havoc in the southern part of the State, especially in Ganjam, Rayagada, and Gajapati districts. There was a time when the King of Odisha was called Gajapati. Even today the Raja of Puri is revered as Gajapati, in whose name the *Panchang* is circulated in the new Hindu calendar year.

There was a time when Kalinga, even Utkal, during the times of Christ and *Anno Domini*, Odisha was importing elephants from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, and was sending them to be sold in other parts of the country. Archival reports stand proof of this. Even today, Odisha has a number of elephant sanctuaries and it is a place of high breeding ground for elephants. Yet poaching of elephants for their ivory is a matter of concern.

I would demand two things from the Government. One, provide compensation to the affected families for the destruction of their houses and crops. Second, adequate funds be provided to respective State Governments, including Odisha, to keep their elephants in their States and in the declared sanctuaries so that they do not migrate to other parts.

The trouble is that we have drawn boundaries between the States. We have drawn boundaries of respective areas where they have to be located. But elephants do not recognise those boundaries. They do not recognise the boundaries of Andhra Pradesh or Chhattisgarh or Jharkhand or Odisha. There is a need today for the forest officials of the respective States to look into this aspect and adequate compensation should be provided to the affected families whose houses and crops are destroyed. Thank you.